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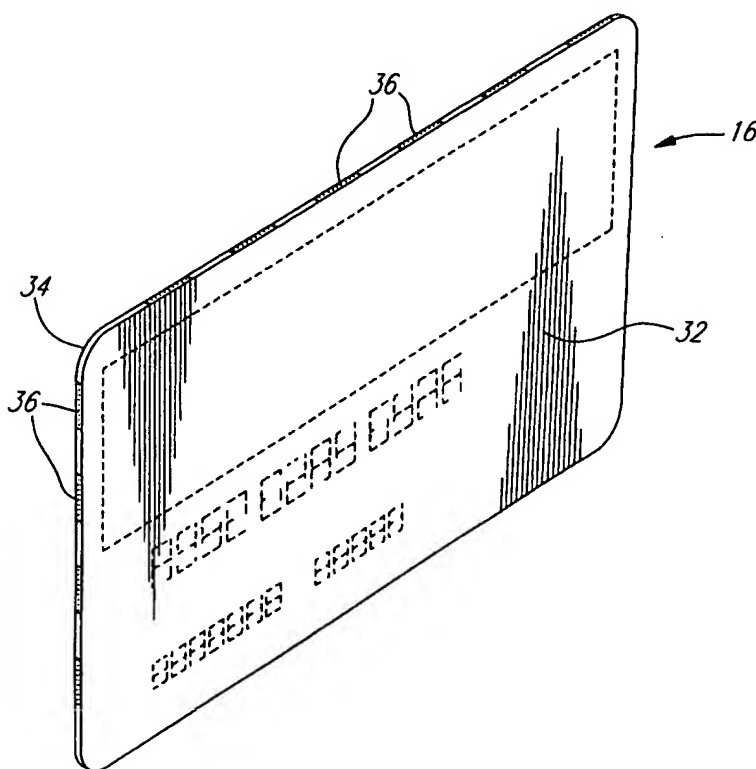
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(54) **CARTE COMPORTANT UNE MARQUE SUR LA TRANCHE**

(54) **CARD PROVIDED WITH EDGE MARKING**



(57) The present invention is concerned with cards provided with edge markings on their peripheral edge surface to simplify the search of such cards in stacks of similar cards where the only thing of the cards that is seen is the edge. These edge markings may have different patterns and colours and may be printed onto edges of cards by a hot stamping process, a micro-printing process, a screen printing process, of the like.

ABSTRACT OF THE DISCLOSURE

The present invention is concerned with cards provided with edge markings on their peripheral edge surface to simplify the search of such cards in stacks of similar cards where the only thing of the cards that is seen is the edge. These edge markings may have different patterns and colours and may be printed onto edges of cards by a hot stamping process, a micro-printing process, a screen printing process, of the like.

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TITLE OF THE INVENTION

CARD PROVIDED WITH EDGE MARKING

5 FIELD OF THE INVENTION

The present invention generally relates to cards. More specifically, the present invention is concerned with a card provided with a peripheral edge surface with a non-negligible thickness.

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BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

Markings on the front and rear surfaces of a card are very well known in the art.

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In the case of a business card, these markings are the *raison d'être* of the card and usually convey information about a business or an individual.

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In the case of credit cards or other similar plastic cards, the front and rear surfaces are usually provided with markings indicating the issuer of the particular card and are often embossed with some information identifying the recipient of the card. Other information about the recipient of the card are usually placed on a magnetic strip provided

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on the rear surface of the card.

While these front and rear surface markings are essential to recognize one card from the others, they have a significant

drawback of not providing any indication of the issuer of the card when only the peripheral edge of the card can be seen.

5 This is a significant drawback when the cards are stacked in a wallet. Indeed, the user has to remove an entire stack from the wallet and to peruse the cards to determine which is the required card.

10 Some card issuers have decided to design cards in a plastic material having a solid colour that is similar or identical to the primary colour used on the front and rear surfaces of the card.

15 This card design suffers many drawbacks. First, because of the conventional technology used to cut the cards to shape from a blank plastic sheet is such that some stress marks are left on the peripheral edge of the card. Unfortunately, these stress marks are discoloured, thus unsightly since they contrast unevenly with the solid colour of the card. A second drawback of cards made of coloured plastics is the high cost of colouring the plastic. To decrease the impact
20 of this drawback, the makers usually reduce the density of the pigments used, thereby making the colour look dull.

OBJECTS OF THE INVENTION

25 An object of the present invention is therefore to provide an improved card having markings on its peripheral edge surface to overcome the above-noted drawbacks.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

More specifically, in accordance with the present invention, there is provided a card, having a predetermined thickness, and comprising:

- two opposite faces;
 - a peripheral edge surface; and
 - edge markings provided on the peripheral edge surface;
- the edge markings facilitating the search of the card among other cards.

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According to another aspect of the present invention, there is provided a method for making edge marked cards; the method comprising the steps of:

- providing a card having a predetermined thickness, two opposite faces and a peripheral edge surface; and
- printing edge markings on the peripheral edge surface of the card.

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Other objects, advantages and features of the present invention will become more apparent upon reading of the following non restrictive description of preferred embodiments thereof, given by way of example only with reference to the accompanying drawings.

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BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

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In the appended drawings:

Figure 1 is a perspective view of a wallet containing a plurality of cards, two of which including edge markings according to a first embodiment of the present invention;

5 Figure 2 is a perspective view of a card provided with edge markings according to the first embodiment of the present invention;

 Figure 3 is a perspective view illustrating a card provided with edge markings according to a second embodiment of the present
10 invention; and

 Figure 4 is a perspective view of a card provided with edge markings according to a third embodiment of the present invention.

15 **DESCRIPTION OF THE PREFERRED EMBODIMENTS**

 Turning now to Figure 1 of the appended drawings, a wallet including first and second card receiving pockets 12 and 14 is illustrated in a perspective view.

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 A plastic wallet sized card 16 provided with edge markings according to a first embodiment of the present invention is provided in the pocket 12 between two unmarked plastic cards 18 and 20.

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 Similarly, a plastic card 22 comprising markings according to a first embodiment of the present invention is inserted in the pocket 14 along with plastic cards 24, 26, 28 and 30.

As will be easily understood, the identification of the cards 16 and 22 in their respective stack of cards is simplified by the presence of edge markings on these cards. It is also to be noted that the cards 16 and 22 would also be easily recognizable if they were among a stack of papers, business cards, or the like in one of the pockets 12 and 14.

Figure 2 of the appended drawings illustrates a perspective view of an enlargement of the card 16 of Figure 1. The card 16 includes two opposite faces 32 (only one shown) and a peripheral edge surface 34 having a conventional credit card thickness of about 1/32 inches (about .8 mm).

The edge markings on the peripheral edge surface 34 of the card 16 illustrated in Figure 2 consist in regularly spaced solid colour markings 36. The markings 36 are such that their colour contrasts with the colour of the card 16.

Figure 3 of the appended drawings illustrates a card 38 provided with edge markings according to a second embodiment of the present invention. In this second embodiment, the markings are in the form of two solid colour stripes 40 and 42 alternating on the peripheral edge surface 39 of the card 38.

Turning finally to Figure 4, a card 44 provided with edge markings according to a third embodiment of the present invention is illustrated. The markings are in the form of solid colour stripes 46, 48 and 50 repetitively provided on the peripheral edge surface 52 of the card 44.

It is therefore believed possible to easily identify patterns of relatively smaller stripes, such as stripes 46, 48 and 50, provided onto the peripheral edge surface of cards. A combination of different colours and different patterns may thereby yield a plurality of different edge markings for card originating from different issuers.

As will be easily understood by one skilled in the art, the edge markings discussed hereinabove could be printed on the edges of cards via a conventional printing process such as, for example, hot stamping processes, micro-printing processes, screen printing processes.

An advantage of the use of the above-mentioned processes to print markings onto the peripheral edge surfaces of the cards, is that these processes can be implemented on line, i.e. that the markings may be printed onto the peripheral edge of the card during its manufacture.

Of course, other printing processes could also be implemented, such as, for example, hand painting.

Furthermore, if the markings are printed according to a micro-printing process, further information about the issuer and/or the recipient of the card could be included in the markings to increase security.

It is to be noted that even though cards illustrated in Figures 1 to 4 are similar in size to credit cards, other cards made of plastic material or thick paperboard material could be provided with

similar edge markings to yield the same advantages, as long as their thickness is sufficient to allow the edge markings to be printed thereon.

Although the three embodiments have been described
5 hereinabove with stripes as markings, any other markings could be printed onto the peripheral edge of cards, providing that the peripheral edge thickness is sufficient. Such alternative markings can include, for example, lines, curves, letters, numbers and/or symbols.

10 It can also be advantageous to use colours on the peripheral edge of the card similar to the colour that identifies the issuer on one of the two opposite faces of the card.

It is finally to be noted that the above noted drawbacks
15 of the prior art consisting in using solid coloured plastic to form the cards are alleviated since the plastic used to make cards according to the present invention is advantageously white to prevent unsightly stress marks and to reduce the cost. Therefore, cards made according to the present invention are more aesthetically pleasing than cards made of
20 solid coloured plastics.

Of course, cards according to the present invention could also be made from coloured plastics.

25 Although the present invention has been described hereinabove by way of preferred embodiments thereof, it can be modified, without departing from the spirit and nature of the subject invention as defined in the appended claims.

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. A card having a predetermined thickness, said card comprising:
5 two opposite faces;
a peripheral edge surface; and
edge markings provided on said peripheral edge surface; said edge markings facilitating the search of said card among other cards.
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2. A card as recited in claim 1, wherein said edge markings include at least one marking taking from the group consisting of lines, curves, stripes, letters, numbers and symbols.
- 15 3. A card as recited in claim 1, wherein said edge markings include at least one pattern.
4. A card as recited in claim 3, wherein said pattern is repetitive.
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5. A card as recited in claim 1, wherein said edge markings include alternating patterns.
6. A card as recited in claim 1, wherein said edge
25 markings include at least one colour.

7. A card as recited in claim 6, wherein one of said at least one colour of said edge markings is similar to a colour on one of said opposite faces.

5 8. A card as recited in claim 1, wherein said card is a wallet sized card.

9. A method for making edge marked cards; said method comprising the steps of:
10 providing a card having a predetermined thickness, two opposite faces and a peripheral edge surface; and
printing edge markings on said peripheral edge surface of said card.

15 10. A method for making edge marked cards as recited in claim 9, wherein said printing step is done by a hot stamping process.

11. A method for making edge marked cards as recited in claim 9, wherein said printing step is done by a screen printing process.

20 12. A method for making edge marked cards as recited in claim 9, wherein said printing step is done by a micro-printing process.

25 13. A method as recited in claim 9, wherein said edge markings include encoded information.

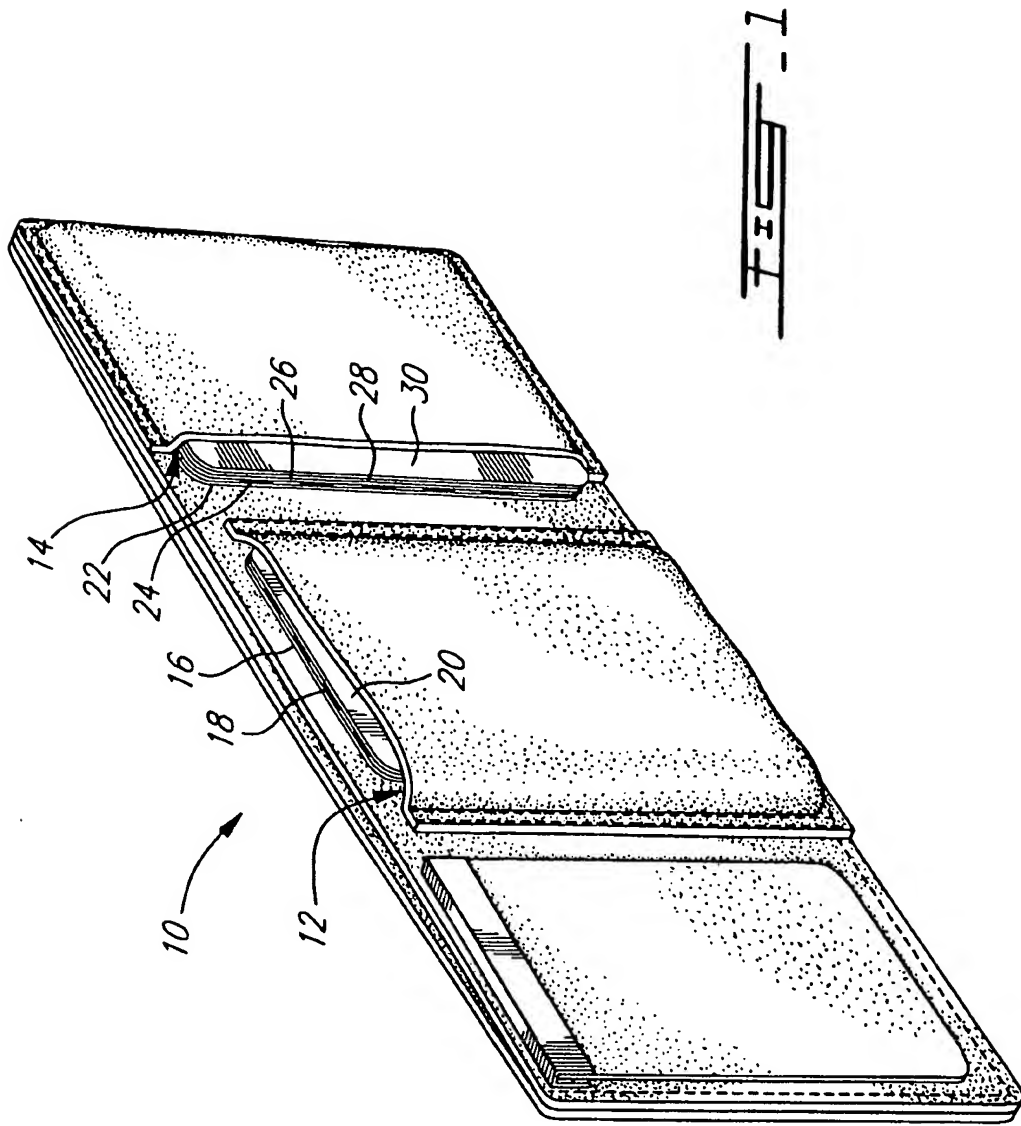


FIG. 1

